

## FRENCH IXDO-CHMA

be the formidable revenge of the animal on the spirit, but for a moment at least it made the conqueror into a superman.

To those brutally introduced into the colony, there came after the shock, a physical flowering and awakening. It was a slow process.

Indo-China neither the stunning beauty of the Alps nor the obvious loveliness of the Midi, yet its enchantment worked obscurely

in the **blood**, like the slow but fatal intoxication of opium. The senses

of white men were overwhelmed by the great **heat**, but they still re-

sponded to the imperious vitality in everything about them. The tropical

fires **consumed** the wok fibre of Occidentals, yet irresistibly attracted

them by its barbaric pushing force. This awakening of the senses

increased the love of living and also the fear of death.

New feelings,,

unsuspected resources were discovered and brought to life by contact

with **this** overwhelming nature and by these strangely different Orient-

als. Emotions became more intense—the good as well as the bad, 'Hie

ciolony was for some men, exasperated by the routine of bourgeois

**existence**, a stimulating escape. It meant the return to a more real set

of values and away from the artificiality of **social** conventions and the

machine **age**.

In Cambodia and Laos the transition was particularly easy to a simple

life peoples whose Rousseau-like virtues harmonized with eigh-

teenth-century traditions. There was a repose in the force and majesty

of nature: the **timelessoess of this contemplative life was uninterrupted**

for monthly letters from France. The sense of profound **peace**,

Ac comforting happiness that comes from the absence of violent emo-

tions, **the** conviction that nothing exists beyond the eye\*s

—ill have made a particular appeal to world-weary  
Europeans.  
Yet wI» have responded most completely to  
this siren appeal  
found It with danger. **The** European **surrenders**  
his action-  
to Oriental contemplation at the **cost** of his wiE, **He**  
cannot  
life- heritage without a **despairing** sense of  
atrophy,  
growths by the **tropics**, the premature  
awakening of  
*ike* or the cast by **its** charm, is  
broken by a swift inner  
expansion; in the end the Occidental  
and the spirit **crumbles** away just as certain textiles  
trc la **the** **c&mote**. Too great love of the exotic  
victimizes  
**the** Westerner, the love of perverse  
things. Even if he  
the **btt** been fundamentally **transformed**. **He**  
**is**  
to **the** West seems to Mm poiffid and  
he is to **In**  
destroyed **biro**.